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C O N F I D E N T I A L YEREVAN 000064

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [AORC](#) [EU](#) [IR](#) [KNNP](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#)

SUBJECT: ARMENIA CONSIDERING NEXT STEPS IN VIEW OF U.S.
DEMARCHÉ

REF: STATE 6236

Classified By: Amb. John Evans for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1. (C) Ambassador delivered reftel demarche on reporting Iran to the UNSC to Armenian Deputy Foreign Minister Arman Kirakossian January 13. Although officially on leave, Kirakossian was well aware of recent developments, had seen the EU-3 FMs' statement already and undertook to consider how Armenia might be helpful, given that there is a session of the Iran-Armenia Inter-Governmental Commission scheduled for 1-2 February in Tehran. Kirakossian shared our deep concern over Iran's flouting of international conventions.

2. (C) Sitting in with Kirakossian was Artem Arzumanyan, Director of the Middle East Department of the MFA. Arzumanyan asked how certain the United States was that Iran's behavior was really a genuine pursuit of a nuclear weapon and not a means of Iran's asserting itself politically while the United States was tied down in Iraq. The Ambassador answered that, while political pressure on the West could well be one of the intended goals of Iran's recent actions, the pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability by Iran was a very serious matter and the evidence of her pursuit of such a capability was copious.

3. (C) Arzumanyan also asked what language an eventual UNSCR might contain. The Ambassador referred him to the third to last tick that mentions a "range of available options" that are available to the Security Council and the U.S. preference for a "graduated approach." As it seemed Arzumanyan was fishing for evidence that the U.S. might be planning a resort to military action -- Armenia's worst nightmare -- the Ambassador stressed that we were still very much hoping for a diplomatic resolution of the problem, and that the steps contemplated constituted a new phase of diplomacy.

4. (C) Former Armenian Ambassador to Tehran Gegham Gharibjanian, now another deputy foreign minister, next joined the conversation. He shared his opinion that there was a political power struggle underway in Iran between the newcomers around Ahmadinejad and some of the "old guard."

5. (C) As for what Armenia might be able to do to assist the international community, the Ambassador suggested that Yerevan consider either postponing or cancelling the next session of the Iran-Armenia Intergovernmental Commission, scheduled to meet February 1-2 in Tehran on a wide range of issues including energy and transport, as a way of signalling to the Iranians that their present course was fraught with danger, or else find ways to impress upon Iranian officials, speaking as friends and neighbors, that their current course was unwise. The Armenian officials agreed that they needed to consider what steps to take, but indicated that postponing or cancelling the session would probably be too provocative an act for them to take. (Note: The Armenians considered postponing the last session, which took place shortly after Ahmadinejad's notorious remarks about expunging Israel from the map, but concluded that they could not risk it. End Note)

6. (C) The Ambassador renewed his suggestion that the Armenians pass on to us and the Europeans any useful insights they might gain from their involvement with Iran, especially given the new actors now on the scene in Tehran.
EVANS